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SITUATION REPORTS

POLAND

Escalating political and economic demands by workers in Gdansk have placed the strikers on a collision course with the regime.

[REDACTED] the workers' main political demands--advanced by a joint strike committee claiming to represent 21 of at least 55 enterprises on strike in Gdansk--include free trade unions, abolition of censorship, release of political prisoners, greater church access to the media, and abolition of privileges enjoyed by police, security, and party personnel. [REDACTED]

The workers' economic demands reportedly include wage increases of about 20 percent and the indexing of wages to inflation, the introduction of meat rationing, reduction of meat prices, and the transfer of meat supplies from the export to the domestic market. [REDACTED]

The workers refuse to negotiate until telephone service is restored between Warsaw and Gdansk. A government negotiating team--headed by Deputy Premier Pyka--reportedly will arrive in Gdansk today. [REDACTED]

The regime probably is prepared to grant some economic demands, but clearly is not ready to give ground on most political issues. It is unclear whether the workers are inclined to compromise. In the past, they have been willing to return to work after receiving economic benefits and promises to consider other grievances. [REDACTED]

Militants and dissidents, however, apparently are playing an important role in the Gdansk strikes. Some of the worker demands reflect long-standing dissident objectives [REDACTED]

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The influential Catholic Church leadership has thus far not commented on the situation in Gdansk, but [REDACTED] one of the priests who said mass for striking shipyard workers yesterday encouraged them to continue their stoppage and not to compromise. This may have helped stiffen the strikers' resolve. [REDACTED]

The situation in Gdansk deteriorated over the week-end after an agreement between management and strike leaders at the Lenin shipyards collapsed and strikes spread to neighboring Gdynia. Local transportation is paralyzed, and long lines have formed at food stores as the populace seeks to stock up. [REDACTED]

In an appeal to citizens of Gdansk local leaders termed the situation "alarming," warned of hostile forces at work, and tried to play on patriotism and self-restraint to get workers back on the job, but have not yet produced any results. Any prolongation of the dispute in Gdansk risks triggering sympathy strikes elsewhere. There presently are work stoppages in four other provinces, but none appear to be in response to the situation in Gdansk. [REDACTED]

Party chief Gierek's reluctance to use police may be severely tested. In a thinly veiled effort to pressure workers at the Lenin enterprise, the Gdansk party leader reportedly implied to strikers that he could not guarantee that police would remain aloof after Monday. Clashes between police and workers--even if the police were unarmed and there were no deaths--could cause other disturbances. [REDACTED]

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